GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:215
ANSWERED ON:27.08.2007
LIVELIHOOD FOR SMALL FARMERS
Adhalrao Patil Shri Shivaji

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the imperfect policy regime and deceleration of agricultural growth during the past decade is responsible for the plight of small and marginal farmers and landless agricultural labourers that have been gradually losing their livelihood as reported in the Hindu dated 27th June, 2007;

(b) if so, the corrective measures taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether the Government proposes to identify agricultural distress zones and secure livelihood for small farmers; and

(d) if so, the steps initiated by the Government in that direction so far?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 215 DUE FOR REPLY ON 27TH AUGUST, 2007.

(a): Question refers to a news item that appeared in THE HINDU dated 27th June 2007 reporting about the deliberations in a symposium which took place at the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur to discuss the Reports of the National Commission on Farmers. The National Commission on Farmers in their Reports had highlighted about the problems faced by the farmers, including the small and marginal farmers, in the country. It is a fact that during the last decade, the growth rate of agriculture sector has decelerated to about 2.2 per cent per annum impacting the farmers condition.

(b) to (d): Improvement of the conditions of the farmers including small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers has been a concern of the Government. A number of initiatives to improve their condition have been in place. These include:

A comprehensive credit policy was announced on 18th June 2004 to double the flow of credit to the agriculture sector in three years.

From Kharif 2006-07, farmers are being provided crop loan upto Rs.3.00 lakh at 7 per cent rate of interest.

A Special Rehabilitation Package has been launched in 31 specially distressed districts in four States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala.

National Horticulture Mission has been operationalised.

A National Rainfed Area Authority has been set up to expand area under irrigation, improved water management with watershed development and rain harvesting in the rainfed areas.

Government has recently approved a Centrally Sponsored Scheme `National Food Security Mission` (NFSM) to increase production and productivity of rice, wheat and pulses.

Government has also approved for a new Additional Central Assistance (ACA) Scheme to enhance public investment in agriculture and allied sectors, to incentivise States to draw up comprehensive State and District Agriculture Plans and to help them to achieve the targeted agricultural growth rates.